



STANFORD UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER

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STANFORD UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
Department of Genetics

July 24, 1973

*Handwritten: 7/24/73, Mr. E.W. Littlefield*

Mr. E.W. Littlefield  
Chairman of the Board  
Utah International Inc.  
550 California Street  
San Francisco, California 94104

Dear Mr. Littlefield,

Thank you for your letter of July 11th. I have only just returned from a trip abroad and welcome an opportunity to reply to it.

I should start by stating that I am by no means committed to the particular policy positions that NRDC has undertaken in the litigation of a number of environmental questions. I am committed to an orderly process of the presentation of diverse points of views in a framework that will permit their orderly adjudication after a fair hearing in accordance with existing law. Few groups have been as effective as NRDC in bringing such questions to judicial attention and thereby helping to further the purposes of public law in a democracy. The need to establish such mechanisms of orderly confrontation, in a realistic way that may help to balance the historical preponderance of established interests in the exploitation of natural resources is an aim that has overridden my occasional uneasiness about the particular positions advocated by the staff and fellow members of the board of NRDC.

I would also say that Dr. Dubos' language is certainly more picturesque than I could visualize using myself. I also have to say that Dr. Dubos has undoubtedly been infinitely more effective in conveying some very important messages to the public consciousness than I have ever been able to do.

I do not believe that NRDC advocates the total abolition of strip mining, although the third paragraph of Dr. Dubos' letter may well be read to convey such an intention. I would also agree that Dr. Dubos has not attempted to analyze the benefit side of the utilization of mineral resources by this technique. Personally I am deeply sympathetic with the dilemma, if one could even call it that, posed by your remarks about mining in New Mexico.

Your penultimate paragraph suggests that we really do not have different objectives, namely "proper and wise regulation"; and I do not believe that the adjudication of the cases which are being pursued by NRDC can possibly have any other consequence than the establishment of such regulatory control. Do you believe that NRDC should be discouraged from the presentation of its case before the courts for adjudication

*Handwritten: LITTLEFIELD, E.W.*

7/24/73

with respect to the very issues of the environmental costs and human benefits that are indeed a matter of mutual concern? The real work of NRDC is in the preparation and prosecution of these cases, under law, and for that reason, and in the belief that you share our commitments to the ventilation of such issues, I would have no hesitation in asking you to continue to contribute to the council.

To turn however to Dr. Dubos' letter, I can certainly understand your sense of grievance about its rhetoric and in particular that it does not attempt to present the other side of the case -- obviously there are plenty of resources available for that option and I have little fear that the public will be kept totally unaware of those benefit considerations.

Nevertheless, I believe that NRDC should endeavor to undertake a larger role in public education that might well include the illumination of both sides of such controversies. There are both financial and conceptual impediments to doing this -- for there can be no substitute for its role as advocate in litigatory proceedings -- but this will continue to be the thrust of my own counsel to the board.

Nevertheless, in the interests of fairness I intend to propose that NRDC agree to distribute copies of any rebuttal statement that you might wish to prepare, to the same mailing as Dr. Dubos' original letter; we hope you will understand if we request that you then bear the expense\* of that particular mailing. Elsewhere I have advocated that public interest groups be legally permitted to find some way to earn "profits" to the extent that they can win their point in court -- a system that might redress the present asymmetry of resources. I think you might sympathize with the free enterprise flavor of the competition among such groups that this system could promote. However, we do not yet live in such a utopian world and this leads me to make the rather awkward suggestion that I have just indicated.

Sincerely yours,

Joshua Lederberg  
Professor of Genetics

JL/rr

cc: John Adams, NRDC, New York

\* or perhaps prorated if enclosed with other NRDC material